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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 001018

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN, IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2014

TAGS: AORC PHUM PREL IS SZ AM ICRC

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: MDA AND CONFERENCE ON THIRD PROTOCOL

REF: STATE 104272

Classified By: DCM A.F. Godfrey for reason 1.4 (b,d).

**¶11.** (C) Post delivered demarche talking points regarding the Israeli National Society (MDA) and International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement to MFA International Organizations Department Chief Valery Mkrtumyan June 9 per reftel instructions. Mrkrtumyan said the GOAM did not have a firm policy on integrating Israeli groups like the MDA into the ICRC or IFRC structures, but indicated that Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian was aware of the high-profile nature of the issue and the sensitivities that would surround any future debates. He said he would raise the issue when he spoke with the Foreign Minister (who is travelling in Europe and Asia this week) during their next phone conversation. The prospect of enhancing the security of humanitarian workers piqued the MFA's interest and will likely be the best point of departure for any future engagement with them on the issue. Mkrtumyan, while not committing the GOAM to support Swiss efforts regarding the late October conference on the issue, suggested that Armenia would likely support the initiative -- at a minimum -- as a "way to be friendly to Israel despite their recent, unfavorable comments."

**¶12.** (C) Comment: Mkrtumyan was referring to the late 2003 statements of visiting Israeli officials who chided the Armenians for comparing the events of 1915 with those of the Holocaust. The comment indicates that GOAM policymakers continue to shape their Israel (and regional) policy by factoring in historical issues as much as, or more than, current realities in the Middle East. We are confident that the GOAM will put aside any residual hurt feelings over the issue and communicate their support to the Swiss in advance of the June 17 deadline.

EVANS